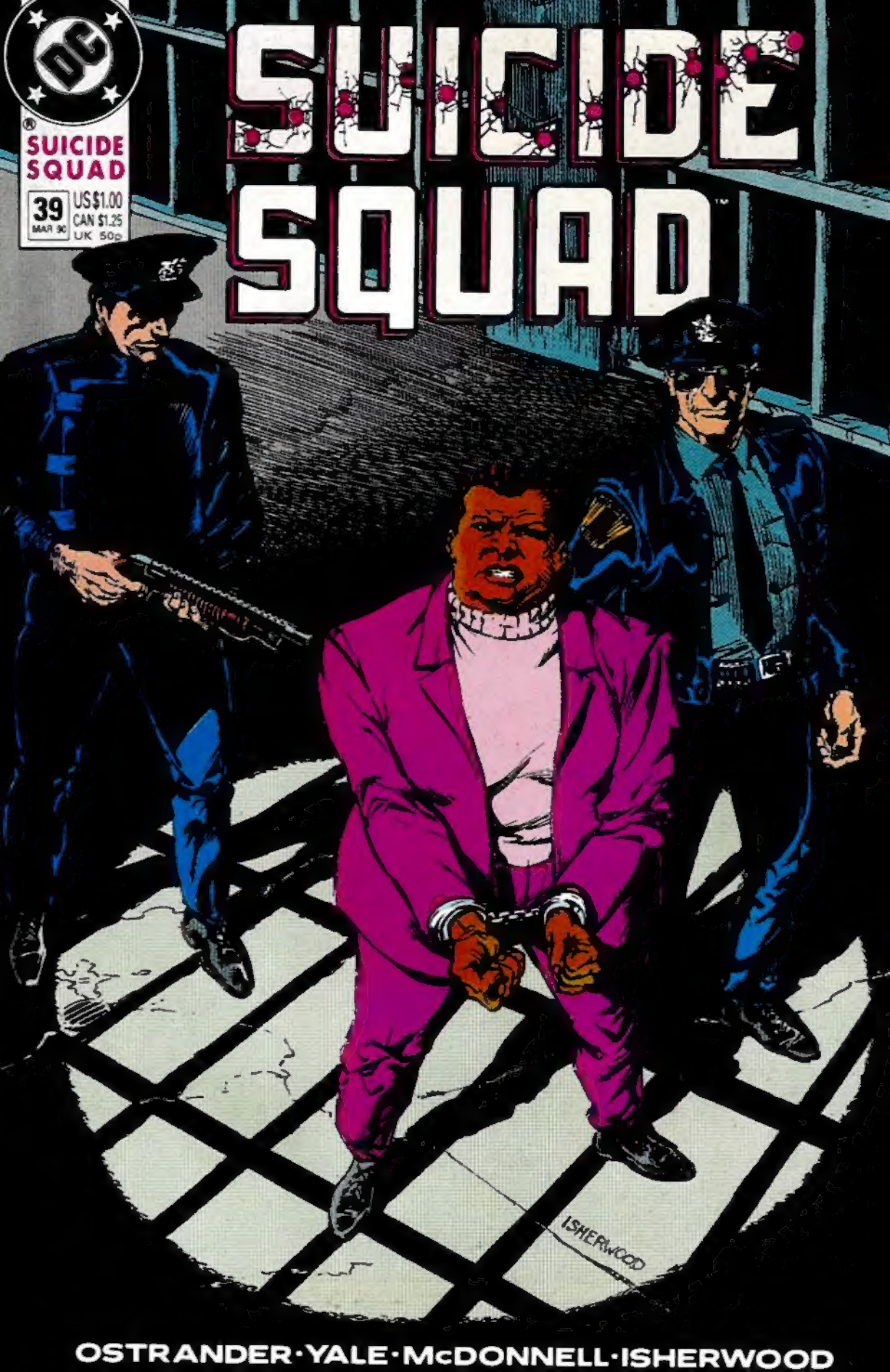
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DEAD ISSUE

urier-Times

EXPOSED

SUICIDE SQUAD SCANDAL

HOW AMANDA WALLER IS STILL RUNNING AMERICA'S METAHUMAN COVERT ACTI AGENCY!

by John Ostrander & Kim Yale

Artist rendition of Mrs. Waller before Senate hearing as rendered by Luke McDonnell and Geof Isherwood

I·N·S·I·D·E

- A letter from Todd Klein
- Career Guide: "Just what does a Colorist do?" by Carl Gafford
- Editorial Page: "Deadlines and Vacant Promise" by Dan Raspler
- Comics:

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YEAH. I'VE SEEN IT.
UH-UH. NOT ON OUR END. LEAK MUST BE IN YOUR OFFICE, STEEL.
YOU'RE GOING TO WHAT?!
CLOSING YOU DOWN. EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, THE SUICIDE SQUAD IS DISBANDED.
DISMISS YOUR STAFF, RETURN PRISONERS TO THEIR CELLS AND THE LUNATICS TO ARKHAM ASYLUM.
HAVE YOU AND THE OTHER PASSEL OF WASHINGTON MAGGOTS LOST WHAT LITTLE SENSE OR NERVE THAT YOU HAD?!
OKAY, THEY KNOW I'M RUNNING THE SQUAD! I NEVER SWORE UNDER OATH THAT I WOULDN'T! SO THEY KNOW THAT KALE IS A FRAUD! THERE WAS NOTHING PATENTLY ILLEGAL ABOUT IT!
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU, WALLER? YOU'VE BECOME AN EMBARRASSMENT... A LIABILITY TO THIS ADMINISTRATION!
THE ONLY WAY TO SALVAGE THIS WILL BE TO CLOSE YOU DOWN AND KEEP YOU CLOSED DOWN! THE SQUAD IS FINISHED!
2

AND WHAT ABOUT THE LOA?
WE'LL GET CHECKMATE TO LOOK INTO IT.

EXCUSE ME, BUT I'VE SEEN THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL REPORTS AND THEY ARE UP TO THEIR NECKS AS IS!
THEY GOT PRESSING CASES RIGHT NOW! NO WAY THEY CAN EVEN LOOK AT THIS LOA BUSINESS FOR TWO-THREE WEEKS AND THAT'LL BE WAY TOO LATE!

IT'S NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN, MRS. WALLER--NOR DO YOU HAVE ANY AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH IT.
I REPEAT, THE SUICIDE SQUAD IS DISBANDED.

CLIK

WELL?!
PACK YOUR BAGS AND REVISE YOUR RESUMES, KIDS. THE HOME OFFICE HAS SHUT US DOWN.
SATISFACTORY. MOST SATISFACTORY.
Courier-Times
EXPOSED
SUICIDE SQUAD SCAN
WALLER IS STILL RUNNI
AS METAHUMAN COVERT
AN ENEMY NEUTRALIZED AND WE HAD ONLY TO PICK UP A PHONE. YOU HAVE TO LOVE IT, DAMBALLAH.
THEY GAVE US MOST OF THE WEAPONS THEMSELVES, NON, BOCOR?
THE SUICIDE SQUAD IS NOW A DEAD ISSUE. WHAT OF OPERATION ZOMBI?

"WE'VE CUT THE COCAINE AND THE CRACK AND THE HEROIN WITH *TETRODOTOXIN* AND ARE VIRTUALLY GIVING THE STUFF AWAY ON THE STREETS.

"THE ENTIRE PROCESS WILL TAKE SIX HOURS AFTER THE DRUG IS INGESTED. OUR SUBJECTS WILL BECOME NAUSEATED AND FIND IT HARD TO BREATHE. THEIR ARMS AND LEGS GET ALL TINGLY, WHICH SPREADS TO THE ENTIRE BODY.

"THEY BECOME PARALYZED AND THEIR BLOOD PRESSURE BOTTOMS OUT. THE LIPS TURN BLUE BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF OXYGEN TO MOST THEY APPEAR TO BE DEAD.

"WE THEN INJECT THEM WITH THE CONCOMBRE ZOMBI AND THEY REVIVIFY AND BECOME OUR ARMY OF THE *LIVING DEAD* -- DEVOID OF ANY WILL OF THEIR OWN, ANSWERABLE TO *YOU*, DAMBALLAH

"AND, AT YOUR COMMAND, WE WILL SEND AMERICA'S CHILDREN TO KILL AMERICA'S PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT, LEGISLATORS AND JUDGES, POLICE OR CLERGY OR MEDIA -- ANYONE WHO WOULD MAKE WAR UPON OUR DRUG TRADE.

"AND THEY WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO KILL THEIR CHILDREN OR BE KILLED BY THEM."

BIEN. BUT HOW LONG WILL THE ZOMBI EFFECT LAST?

A SHORT TIME ONLY UNLESS IT IS RENEWED. OTHERWISE THE SUBJECT BECOMES LETHARGIC AND COMATOSE OR SIMPLY DIES. BUT THE AUTHORITIES WILL NOT KNOW THIS.
AND THE PROCESS HAS BEGUN, YOU SAY?
EXPOSED!
IT HIT THE STREET THE SAME TIME AS THIS NEWSPAPER DID.
ELEGANT. I LIKE THE FEARFUL SYMMETRY.
Courier-Times
EXPOSED!
ALL IS IN MOTION. THERE IS NO ONE TO STOP US AND NOTHING MORE TO BE DONE UNTIL THE TETRODOTOXIN TAKES EFFECT. THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW, BOCOR.
I PROPOSE WE SPEND THE TIME IN OUR FAVORITE FASHION, MAMBO--EXCHANGING ENERGIES AND BINDING OURSELVES TO ONE ANOTHER.
OH-- EXCELLENT IDEA, DAMBALLAH.
6

AND I TELL YOU NEITHER SOLOMON NOR THE LILIES OF THE FIELD WERE ARRAYED SUCH AS THESE.
YUP YUP YUP, PADRE. ME AN' THE LI'L WOMAN HERE WERE PLANNING ON HEADING OUT ANYWAY, EVEN B'FORE WASHINGTON SHUT US DOWN.
YUP YUP YUP. JUNE AND I HAVE DONE OUR TIME AND EARNED OUR FREEDOM AND NOW WE'RE JUST LOOKING FOR A QUIET PLACE TO SETTLE DOWN AND PLAY WITH BOWZER HERE.
WARD, I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU DON'T TOUCH ME THERE!
KLONG!
UH- UH. CAN'T HURT THE BAAAAY-BEEEE!
LORD, I KNOW YOU HAVE A DIVINE PLAN FOR ALL THINGS. FORGIVE ME FOR WONDERING --JUST WHAT PART ARE THEY SUPPOSED TO PLAY IN IT?

COLONEL STONEMAN?
AHH, YOU'RE MAJOR VICTORY? COME IN, SON; COME IN. GLAD YOU COULD COME ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. SIT DOWN.
LOOK, I'M NOT GOING TO BEAT AROUND THE BUSH. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT NO ONE AROUND HERE HOLDS ANYTHING AGAINST YOU FOR HAVING BEEN PART OF THIS "SUICIDE SQUAD" FIASCO.
THAT'S VERY... GENEROUS OF EVERYONE "AROUND HERE."
HELL, MAN--YOU'RE A GOOD SOLDIER! YOU GO WHERE YOU'RE ORDERED AND DO YOUR JOB! NOTHING SHAMEFUL IN THAT!
LOTS OF PEOPLE AROUND HERE SEE GREAT POTENTIAL IN YOU. HELL, THE COUNTRY NEEDS A SYMBOL LIKE MAJOR VICTORY!
SOME OF US AROUND HERE ARE STILL WORRIED, THOUGH, ABOUT WALLER. THE WOMAN'S A LOOSE CANNON AS LONG AS SHE'S FREE.
WE NEED THE GOODS ON HER SO WE CAN NAIL HER BUTT AND WE FIGURED YOU WOULD KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.
SO HOW ABOUT IT, SOLDIER? YOU READY TO HELP YOUR COUNTRY?
WOULDN'T DO YOURSELF ANY HARM, EITHER.

GO TO HELL, STONEMAN.
WHAT?!
SEEING A LOT OF PEOPLE "AROUND HERE" HAVE GOT THE WRONG IMPRESSION ABOUT ME, STONEMAN--SO LET ME GET YOU ALL STRAIGHT.
DESPITE MY BATTLE NAME, I'M A CIVILIAN--NOT A SOLDIER. I DON'T FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS; I FOLLOW MY OWN CONSCIENCE.
BECAUSE OF WALLER, THE FORCE OF JULY DIED. BECAUSE OF WALLER, THE COUNTRY WAS SAVED. THE FORCE DESERVED BETTER; SO DOES WALLER.
I CAN'T HELP THEM; I WON'T BETRAY HER.
I'M THROUGH BEING ANYONE'S STOOGE. AND I NEVER WAS ANYONE'S STOOLIE.
NAIL WALLER ON YOUR OWN.
TURN IN YOUR UNIFORM! YOU'RE THROUGH!
YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME THE UNIFORM. THE MAN WHO DID IS DEAD. I'VE GOT IT--AND I'M KEEPING IT.
AND IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GET IT FROM ME--TAKE IT.
SLAM!

KALE'S ALREADY TAKEN OFF AND MITCH AND THE OTHERS ARE SHUTTING DOWN YEAGER AND HEADING OUT. MAC, MURPH, DR. WHITE AND FATHER CRAEMER ARE ALL STAYING ON. THEY'VE ALL GOT LEGITIMATE JOBS HERE.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, JOHN?

NO. I CAN'T. SOMETHING CHANGED FOR ME WHEN FLO GOT KILLED. SHE WAS A GOOD KID, MARI -- SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND HERE AND FOR HER TO DIE LIKE SHE DID, I...

WELL, YVONNE AND I ARE GOING OFF TOGETHER. MAYBE GET REMARRIED AGAIN. I DON'T KNOW.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? ANY WORD FROM BEN?

NO. I DON'T KNOW WHAT STEEL AND THE OTHERS DID TO HIM IN THAT ROOM, BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE'S SHUTTING ME OUT LIKE THIS.

I THOUGHT WE HAD SOMETHING STRONG BETWEEN US -- SOMETHING NOTHING COULD BUST UP. NOW...

SO NOW WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BE? SUPERHERO OR SUPER MODEL?

I'LL TRY MODELLING AGAIN FOR A BIT. HEAD OUT TOWARDS PARIS. SEE IF I CAN PICK UP WORD OF BEN ANYWHERE.

YOU KEEP IN TOUCH. LET ME KNOW IF I CAN DO ANYTHING TO HELP.

I WILL. I LOVE YOU, JOHN.

LOVE YOU, TOO, KID.

EXCUSE MY BARGING IN ON YOUR TENDER LITTLE SCENE, BUT HAVE EITHER OF YOU SEEN THE WALL?

MURPH!

I SAW HER IN THE MIRROR BRIEFING ROOM WITH RAVAN, DEADSHOT AND POISON IVY. SOMETHING WRONG?
I DUNNO. SHE SAYS SHE'S GOING TO HANDLE THEIR TRANSFERS PERSONALLY.
IS IT JUST MY NASTY IMAGINATION, OR IS THE WALL UP TO SOMETHING?
...WE GOT JUNKIES OF ALL STRIPES AND COLORS KEELING OVER A FEW HOURS AFTER TAKING THIS GUNK. THE COPS IN NEW ORLEANS CAUGHT A PUSHER INJECTING THE CORPSES WITH ANOTHER DOSE AND GUESS WHAT? THE DEAD WALK AGAIN.
I GOT SOME SAMPLES FROM A FEW SOURCES I KNOW IN THE NEW ORLEANS PD AND ASKED IVY HERE TO DO AN ANALYSIS, SEEING SHE KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT POISONS.
YOU HAD BETTER HAVE COME UP WITH SOMETHING, GIRL.
OH, I DID RAN A BIO-ASSAY.
THIS STUFF IS TASTY, CRAZY, AND JUST PLAIN NASTY, MAMA.

GIRL, I AM OLD AND TIRED AND EXCEPTIONALLY *CRANKY* AND I AM NOT YOUR MAMA OR YOUR SOCIAL WORKER OR YOUR SHRINK AND I DON'T *HAVE* TO BE *NICE* TO YOU, SO LET'S JUST GET *ON* WITH IT, *SHALL WE?*

OKAY

WELL, THE *FIRST* POWDER CONTAINS TETRODOTOXIN, A POISON TAKEN FROM PUFFER FISH LIKE FUGU. IT'S 500 TIMES MORE POWERFUL THAN CYANIDE.

AN UNDILUTED DROP CAN KILL. I DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT IT-- IT'S AN ANIMAL POISON, YOU SEE. NOT MY THING.

NOW, THE *OTHER* BATCH-- THAT'S *MUCH* MORE INTERESTING. THE STUFF IS *DATURA STRAMONIUM*. A MEMBER OF THE POTATO FAMILY. IN HAITI, IT'S CALLED THE *CONCOMBRE ZOMBI* -- THE *ZOMBI'S CUCUMBER.*

THE DATURA *COUNTERACTS* SOME OF THE TETRODOTOXIN'S EFFECTS BUT *CONTINUES* OTHERS. THEY'RE SUPPOSEDLY USED TO MAKE *ZOMBIES* OF THE LIVING.

MAYBE I SHOULD USE IT ON *FLOYD* HERE. ALWAYS WANTED A DALLIANCE WITH MY OWN *LOVE SLAVE*

ZOMBIES... VOUDOU... *LOA*.

DEAR GOD, THEY'RE CREATING AN *ARMY* FOR THEMSELVES OUT OF DRUG USERS

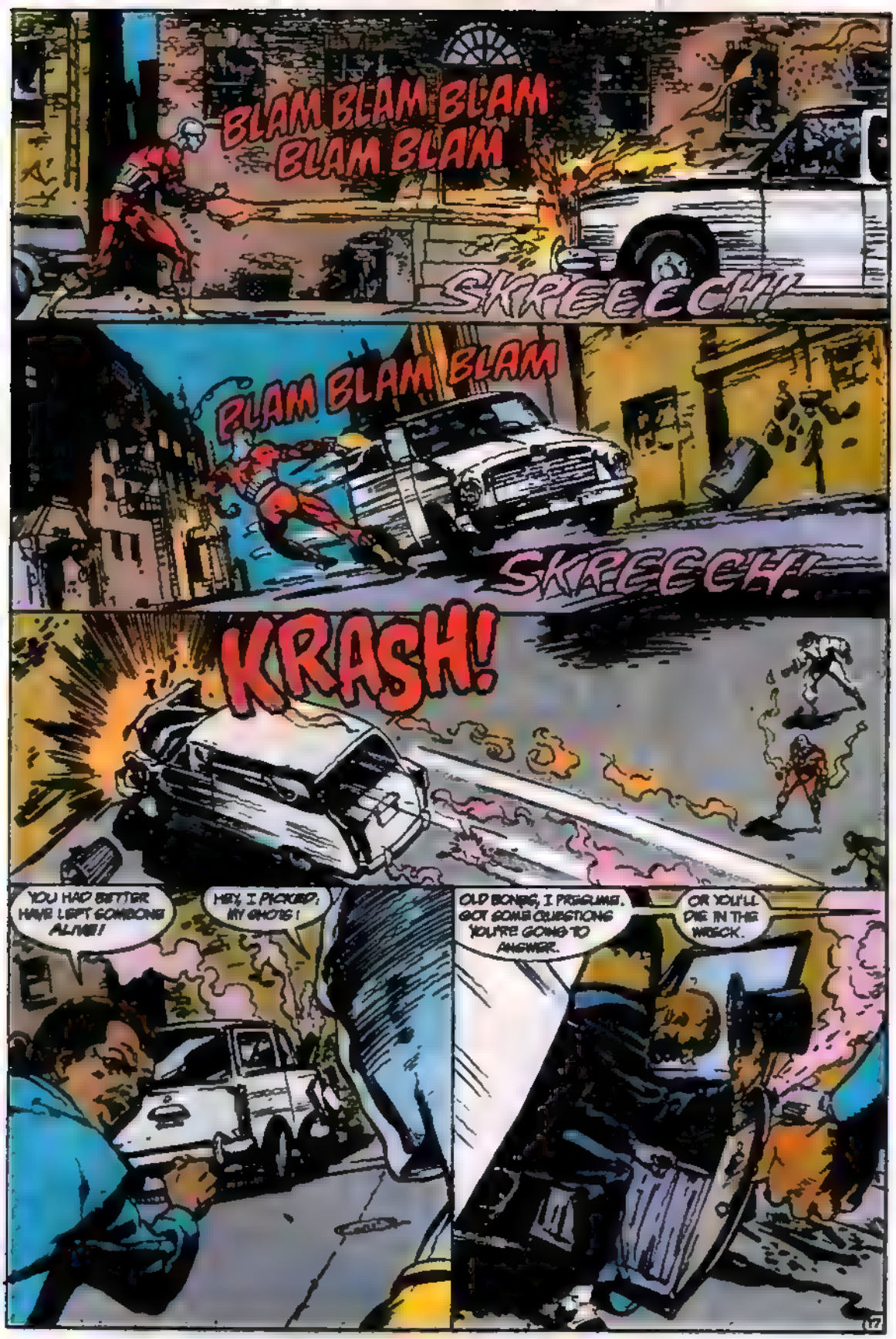
PLEASE. WHY ARE YOU ASKING US TO BE HERE?

THE THREE OF YOU ARE BOUND FOR THE LOCK-UP. ARKHAM WANTS DEADSHOT AND IVY BACK AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO PEN YOU FOR YOUR PART IN THE JIHAD ATTACK ON MANHATTAN
I CAN CUT YOU LOOSE INTERESTED?
WHOM DO I HAVE TO KILL?
THE LOA.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME. ON WHOSE AUTHORITY ARE WE GETTING RELEASED, THOUGH?
MINE. I'LL GET YOU CLEAR AND THEN, ONCE THE MISSION'S OVER, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN. ANY QUESTIONS?
YEAH. I DON'T SEE ANY OF THE HOUSE HEROES IN ATTENDANCE. WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THIS LI'L CLAMBAKE?

ME
REMEMBER--WITH THIS BRACELET I CAN JOLT YOU WITH ELECTRICITY OR BLOW YOUR WHOLE DAMN ARM OFF IF ANY OF YOU CROSS ME WHILE WE'RE ON THE MISSION. DON'T TRY PUSHING IT. LET'S GO.
IS THERE A PLAN OR DO WE JUST SHOOT THINGS AT RANDOM?
YOU SHOOT THINGS ON MY ORDER.
"SOME BACKGROUND ON THE LOA I ALREADY GOT. THEY'RE NOT TRUE VOODOO PRACTITIONERS; THEY JUST COMBINE SOME OF THOSE ELEMENTS WITH BIG-TIME CRIME TO FORM A SORT OF MORTICIAL UNDERWORLD.
"THEIR AGENTS--THEIR PIMPS AND PUSHERS--STYLE THEMSELVES AS HOUNGANS OR PRIESTS. WE PICK ONE OF THEM AND WE START WORKING OUR WAY UPWARDS."
I WANT DAMBALLAH. I WANT BOCOR AND MAMBO.
YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHERE TO FIND THEM.
GURK!
NOT TO MOVE, PLEASE

DUNNO! I AIN'T THAT HIGH UP THE RADA!
YOU REPORT TO SOMEBODY. WHO AND HOW AND WHERE? HOW DO YOU GET THE STUFF?
CAN'T! THEY'LL KILL ME!
YES. MUCH BETTER I KILL YOU INSTEAD.
LONG WHITE HEARSE CRUISES THE PROJECTS BY THE OLD CEMETERY!
MAN THEY CALL OLD BONES! EVERY FOUR HOURS -- DUE THERE IN A HALF HOUR!
FINE. NY, KISS THE MAN GOOD-BYE
PUCKER UP!
GYAAAAH!
THERE. A LITTLE SOMETHING TO REMEMBER ME BY, SUGAR.

"LET'S GO, CHILDREN. WE'VE GOT A HEARSE TO CATCH."
HEY, WHO BE THIS CRAZY FOOL IN THE ROAD?
RUN THE FOOL DOWN AND OUT OF OUR WAY.
VRUMMM!

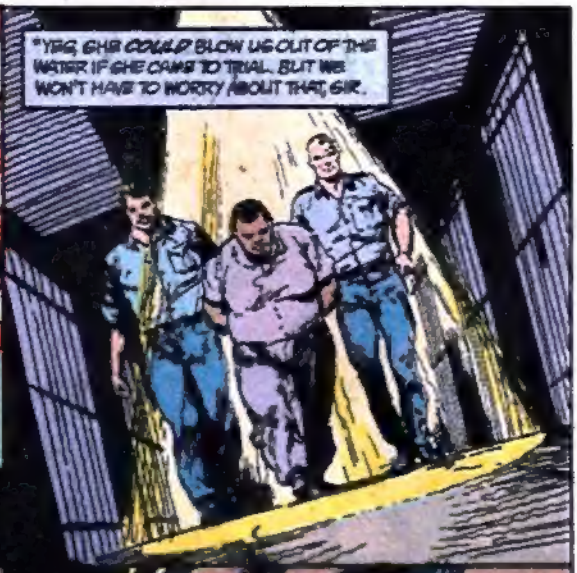

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
SKREEECH!
BLAM BLAM BLAM
SKREEECH!
KRASH!
YOU HAD BETTER HAVE LEFT SOMEONE ALIVE!
HEY, I PICKED MY SHOTS!
OLD BONES, I PRESUME. GOT SOME QUESTIONS YOU'RE GOING TO ANSWER.
OR YOU'LL DIE IN THE WRECK.
17

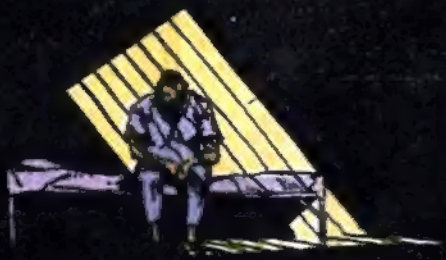
TAKE MY LIFE. PFAH, A LITTLE THING IT IS.
I BETRAY DAMBALLAH AND HE EAT MY SOUL--AS HE WILL EAT YOURS, FAT WOMAN, FOR THIS ATTACK.
GIVE HIM A CARESS, NY--AND A KISS OF SODIUM PENTOTHAL.
OKAY, YOU KNOW THE SCORE. DAMBALLAH'S SENDING OUT WORD AT MIDNIGHT... 45 MINUTES FROM NOW.
THEY GOT ZOMBI AND HIRED MUSCLE THROUGHOUT. IF DAMBALLAH, BOCOR, OR MAMBO WALK OUT ALIVE, WORD PASSES TO THEIR ZOMBI ARMY AND LOTS OF PEOPLE DIE.
SO THE LOA DIBS FIRST.
LOUISIANA ORDNANCE ASSOCIATION
LET'S GO.

FWADOOM!
BLAM BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

HUGO! WHAT'S GOING ON? I HEARD SHOTS!
I TRIED TO --TO TELL YOU, DAMBALLAH! IT'S AMANDA WALLER-- SHE...
WHAM!
VERY WELL.
YOU HAVE US.
WE KIDNAPPED.
I DON'T CARE. I'M NOT PART OF THE LAW, NOT ANYMORE.
KILL THEM.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
GET OUT. GET AWAY.
WE'RE FINISHED!
BOURBON STREET MASSACRE!
YES, SIR, I'VE SEEN IT
I PERSONALLY TOOK HER REPORT, SIR.
AFTER THE LOA WAS KILLED, SHE LET RAWAN, ISLEY AND LAWTON LOOSE -- NO, WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY ARE. THEN WALLER CALLED THE POLICE AND STAYED THERE UNTIL THE COPS ARRIVED.
FROM WHAT WE'VE RECOVERED FROM THE LOA HEADQUARTERS, EVERYTHING JIBES WITH WHAT SHE HAS TOLD US PRIVATELY
NO, I AGREE, SIR. THE PUBLIC DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW. WHAT DO I THINK WE SHOULD DO ABOUT WALLER?





NEXT: *ONE YEAR LATER* -- GUEST-STARRING *BATMAN!*

SUICIDE NOTES

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L-5399

Dear Dan,

This is about SUICIDE SQUAD #35.

Whew. I just thought you should know that I was unable to exhale for 22 pages. Not a real long time, but it wasn't easy while I was sitting on the edge of my seat biting my fingernails.

A really action-packed, issue-long fight scene! Ouch.

And now that I see Geof Isherwood's finishes over Luke's layouts, I can see how much he is adding to the depth and intensity of the art. Don't lose this new guy. He makes Luke's high-contrast, dynamic storytelling even more dynamic, while adding a grittiness and 3-D quality we don't get too often in newsprint comics. Geof's rendering of the figures is great, but as I flipped through the past few issues before starting this letter, I noticed how realistic all the close-up faces have been looking.

Keep it up, guys. This book is good and getting better.

Rita Lopez
Brooklyn, NY

Thanks, Rita.

*****

Dear Bob,

Issue #35 was great. I loved it! Issues like this are what the Suicide Squad is all about. They go into an alien environment, start kicking some butt, but the tide turns and they start getting wasted. Of course, they win at the end, but that's beside the point.

One of the best things about this issue is that Count Vertigo is either dead or dying. Don't get me wrong—I like the guy but it has been a while since someone in the Squad has died, and it's just not realistic that someone in their line of work hasn't died in a long time. This might seem like a strange request, but please kill off Count Vertigo. That way this book can keep some of its realism.

I have noticed that a lot of people have been asking you to kill off Captain Boomerang. I think that would be a big mistake. For one thing, I like the Captain. He's selfish, conceited, obnoxious, and a total jerk. But that's why I like him so much. I have some friends like that and Captain Boomerang reminds me of them. Another reason he shouldn't be killed is that he fits right in with the Squad. The people that make up Suicide Squad are criminal scum—most of them, anyway. Captain Boomerang is no exception. He's probably the worst of the group and Suicide Squad just wouldn't be the same without him. So please please please don't even think of killing the Captain off!

Richard Garcia
580 Verbenia Court
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

With all that happened on Apokolips, we hope you don't mind if Vertigo remained alive. Instead, we lost Flo, Briscoe, and Dr. Light, which is enough of a loss. Over the course of this book's three-year run, we have lost about a dozen or more members and that's a pretty hefty death toll for a single title.

*****

Dear Mr. Raspler,

If there's one thing I can't stand in a comic book, it's a fight scene that is drawn out for several pages. SUICIDE SQUAD #35 offers us an *issue-long* fight scene and ... oddly enough ... it actually held my interest! I thought the art was pretty outrageous, too. Mr. McDonnell's work looks like some sort of wild cross between Gil Kane and Neal Adams with a dash of Kevin Maguire thrown in, to boot ... in other words: this guy is definitely someone to watch out for.

Tom Mohan
87-24 110th Street, 2nd Floor
Richmond Hill, NY 11418

Luke has been a steady presence in these pages right from the start, Tom. It wasn't until this year that he bade farewell to the Squad in order to pursue a life-long dream—illustrating The Phantom's adventures. Luke is also a speed demon, though, and he managed to help out by doing layouts for Geof for a handful of issues, including, fortunately, this one.

*****

Dear John, Dan, and Bob,

Chomp. Chomp. Chomp.

That's the sound of me eating my words. Last month, I wrote you a letter stating that I thought you had devoted too much space to Bronze Tiger and his rescue effort. Well, issue #35 has made up for that—and then some. *This* is the battle I expected to see in #34. Each of the Squad members going head to head with some of the nastiest scoundrels of Apokolips was fantastic.

I love one-on-one confrontations between individuals from various groups and this was one of the best I've ever seen. The story flowed smoothly from beginning to end, and each of the Squad members received appropriate enough panel-time to shine solo. And, of course, while some of the members of the group defended themselves quite nicely, others got their proverbial butts kicked.

The battle between Shade and Mad Harriet was great. The only drawback was that we all know Shade is not about to die since he's supposed to be starring in a mini-series coming out soon. Having that information kinda ruined what would have been a suspenseful cliffhanger.

I'm 90% sure that Count Vertigo will survive Kanto's attack. When it comes to characters dying in this title, you all make no bones about it. When someone is "offed," we generally *know* it. The dagger didn't seem to hit any vital organs, so I'm assuming the Count will be okay. Speaking of Vertigo, it seems that when it comes to battle situations, he usually fares the worst, or at least not very well. In issue #25, he got a good whomp from Duchess; in #28, he was almost blown to bits; and now, he takes a knife to the gut. Don't you guys like him? But, I suppose he should expect that kind of treatment, what with having a big, green bull's-eye plastered upon his chest.

The brass at DC had better give the go-ahead to that proposed Nightshade mini-series! I want to see more of Eve Eden! I want to know this woman's story. The struggle between her good and bad sides now that she houses the Succubus has really got my interest piqued. Nightshade has become one of the most intriguing and multi-dimensional characters ever to grace the comic book page.

Finally, we have the long-awaited combat between Amanda and Granny Goodness! I'm glad the Wall couldn't hold her own against Granny, because that would have been too unbelievable. But, she *did* put up one hell of a good fight, and that's made her all the more endearing to me. Flo's sentiments concerning Amanda were also quite touching.

Other high points in this issue were: Poison Ivy's sly maneuver to get on the Squad's good side and Major Victory's decision to act responsibly and live up to his beliefs. This is the

only positive portrayal of his character so far in this series and I thank you for that.

The only part of this issue that I didn't care for was the scene with Captain Boomerang. I think you've done his character to death and there's not much more to do with him. I really wish you'd concentrate more on the other characters and remove him from these pages permanently. If not, at least send him on a sabbatical for about a year. His appearances are really starting to irk me.

Oh, and to conclude, thank you for killing off Bernadeth. I hated her. Also, I wrote to you before, saying that I would miss Lashina. Lied. She deserves to get what's coming to her. Blow her to kingdom come!

David J. Harrington
255 C John Burke Drive
Glens Falls, NY 12801

John and Kim have been doing a lot of talking and soul-searching when it comes to the core group in the Squad and we think you'll like the direction we're going in, starting next issue. More on that later.

As for Nightshade, Kim Yale is putting the finishing touches on a proposal. Watch this space for details. And Shade's mini-series has been upgraded to at least a year-long run with Peter Milligan and newcomer Chris Bachalor already at work on the first issue, due this spring!

*****

Dear Bob and Dan,

You were right, it was just like old times in SUICIDE SQUAD #35. Not only was the Ostrander-McDonnell team reunited, but the Squad was back in the type of environment that seems to plague them.

Once again, the team was in a situation over their heads, where things seemingly went from bad to worse. Sigh.

The one difference this time around was that Amanda Waller was part of the team. As such, let's hope she has a chance to view exactly what transpires and what moral choices have to be made on a mission. I could see her learning much from this, and I hope you'll progress along these lines when we get back to Belle Reve.

Mark Lucas
1100 Granville Avenue #2
Los Angeles, CA 90049

*****

OK, Gang,

Here's the bottom line about SUICIDE SQUAD #35: Kim and John's story was pure, high-voltage excitement.

Luke's one-shot return to the Squad was, as always, excellent.

And the Yale/Ostrander connection further established their claim to fame as the *best* dialogue people in the medium. Also, the exchange between Kanto and Count Vertigo was exceptional.

But what's up with Nightshade?

I can hardly wait to see John K. Snyder's depiction of Deadshot in action.

Uncle Elvis
Same Old Address

*****

Dear Dan:

I've noticed something spectacular in SUICIDE SQUAD during the past few months: the incredible inking of Geof Isherwood. Geof's inks truly bring John K. Snyder's pencils to life, and his stunning finishes over Luke McDonnell's layouts in issue #35 were breathtaking! Geof adds a touch of stark, moody realism to this book that makes it one of DC's best-looking titles. Whatever you do, don't lose Geof Isherwood from SUICIDE SQUAD—chain him to his drawing board for life!

Johnny Rose
New Bern, NC

*****

Dear Dan,

Once again, SUICIDE SQUAD has successfully delivered an action-packed issue! "That Hideous Strength" was a wonderful middle chapter in the "Lashina Goes Home" story and a terrific display of the Suicide Squad in combat. So many super-hero team books are wrapped up in characterization these days that the writers neglect the super-heroics and action. John and Kim have never fallen into that pattern in this book, and they always blend the two elements perfectly. Just as the eponymic "Personal Files" books are showcases, the all-out fights as in this issue are spotlights as well.

For the most part, the Squad was able to hold its own against their opponents on Apokolips. Several individual battles were memorable. The fate of Captain Boomerang can't be mortally final, but I wonder if he'll leave Darkseid's planet the same as when he arrived. The *tour de force* was the bout between Amanda and Granny. It was surprising to see Amanda fall, but it was in character that Granny would be the better combatant. Nightshade's scenes were awesome in depiction, and it makes me think that a madness may be taking hold of her in this world as it seemed to take her over in her Shadow World. Seeing her with the Squad again is good nostalgia but, more than that, she seems to fit in with the Squad naturally, even if it is not her desire to do so. Major Victory's fight was interesting, and I would like to see him leave Apokolips a lesser powered and less righteous hero. But it wouldn't surprise me if he doesn't leave the planet alive. I look forward to the third chapter of this story as I can't wait to see the cavalry arrive on Apokolips with the remainder of the Squad and the Forever People. And I hope Flo survives this adventure and returns to Belle Reve a wiser woman.

Just a general question before I close. Is it necessary for a book to have two titles? For instance, this issue was titled "Female Fury" on the cover, yet the inside page dubbed the story "That Hideous Strength." Two titles appear on most DC books, but is there any particular reason for this?

Jim Kelly
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Freeport, NY 11520

The words—or "copy"—you see on a cover aren't really a title. Cover copy usually is simply a brief, punchy-sounding tag-line meant to grab the eye. It's much the same way magazines use cover copy to sell you articles on topics, with the actual articles having separate headlines.

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ZONE OF THE NEXT-ISSUE BOX: Just when you thought it was safe to run a covert government agency ...

No, this wasn't a dream or imaginary tale. Amanda IS behind bars. Sarge Steel HAS disbanded the Suicide Squad. And Ben Turner is still missing. But does that mean next issue will have a 22-page prison scene? Not on your life.

We'll be picking up with Amanda after she's had time to cool off in jail, but don't worry: this lady is not one to enjoy having her freedom restrained. And Sarge Steel will learn exactly WHY the Squad was in existence to begin with. There's a power vacuum building in the world, and without the Suicide Squad to fill it, who knows who might rear his ugly head.

Or should I say "cowl"?

That's right, beginning next month, we explore "The Phoenix Gambit," a four-part story guest-starring The Batman. And yes, you may rest assured that the Squad will be back, too. But what form will it take? And who will be in it? SUICIDE SQUAD #40 will answer at least some of your questions.

Meanwhile, we bid a fond farewell to John K. Snyder III, who's been with us since #27, and welcome Geof Isherwood as our regular artist. He'll be both pencilling and inking, and if you like the cover of this issue, then you'll agree that this book is going to look very hot.

AND NOW FOR THE VERY COOL, EXTRA BONUS NEWS: To commemorate the Squad's entering its fourth year ... to indicate how radical "The Phoenix Gambit" is going to be ... to pander shamelessly to Batman fans ... SUICIDE SQUAD #40 will contain a full-color, fold-out mini-poster! It's going to be a collector's item, so buy at least three.

John, Kim, Geof, Todd, Carl, Bob G. and I are very psyched about this new direction. We're sure you will be, too.

And, to paraphrase Bobby, "Until next month, keep on trekking."

—Dan Raspler
Editing Guy

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